United Nations A/C.3/66/1

General Assembly

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Sixty-sixth session
Third Committee

Allocation of agenda items to the Third Committee

Letter dated 16 September 2011 from the President of the General Assembly to the Chair of the Third Committee

I have the honour to inform you of the decisions taken by the General Assembly at the 2nd plenary meeting of its sixty-sixth session on 16 September 2011, pertaining to the allocation of items to the Third Committee.

I wish to draw your attention to the relevant parts of sections III and IV of the report of the General Committee (A/66/250) concerning the agenda of the Main Committees.

May I also draw your attention to the recommendations on the organization of the session contained in section II of the same report. Those recommendations were also approved by the General Assembly at its 2nd plenary meeting.

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**

11-50303 (E) 210911

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Allocation of items to the Third Committee

1. Election of the officers of the Main Committees [item 5].

A. Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences

2. Social development [item 27]:

   (a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly;

   (b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family;

   (c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing.

3. Advancement of women [item 28]:

   (a) Advancement of women;

   (b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

B. Maintenance of international peace and security

4. Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions [item 62].

D. Promotion of human rights

5. Report of the Human Rights Council [item 64].

6. Promotion and protection of the rights of children [item 65]:

   (a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children;

   (b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children.

7. Rights of indigenous peoples [item 66]:

   (a) Rights of indigenous peoples;

   (b) Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

8. Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance [item 67]:

   (a) Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

   (b) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

9. Right of peoples to self-determination [item 68].

10. Promotion and protection of human rights [item 69]:

    (a) Implementation of human rights instruments;

    (b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

    (c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives;

    (d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

H. Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations

11. Crime prevention and criminal justice [item 107].

12. International drug control [item 108].

I. Organizational, administrative and other matters

13. Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly [item 121].

14. Programme planning [item 135].

United Nations A/C.3/66/2

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 October 2011

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Sixty-sixth session
Third Committee
Agenda item 69 (c)
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Letter dated 24 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a memorandum on the situation of human rights in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (see annex).

I should be most grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 69 (c).

(*Signed*) Than **Swe**
Permanent Representative

11-56341 (E) 101111

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Annex to the letter dated 24 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Memorandum on the situation of human rights in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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I. Introduction

1. The political situation of Myanmar, despite the essentially domestic nature of the matter, has been one of the issues under consideration at the General Assembly for the past two decades, under the pretext of protection of human rights. A country-specific resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar has been submitted by the European Union in the Third Committee since 1991, as a yearly ritual to exert political pressure on the previous Government of Myanmar for democratization and human rights.

2. At the sixty-fifth session, in December 2010, the General Assembly adopted resolution 65/241, "Situation of human rights in Myanmar", which was introduced by the European Union. Myanmar has all along rejected the resolution and dissociated itself from its adoption, as the resolution was found to be intrusive, biased, selective and subjective. As previously, the resolution did not reflect or recognize the realities in the country and cited numerous unsubstantiated allegations as facts, which has led to erroneous conclusions.

3. Pursuant to resolution 65/241, the current session of the General Assembly will continue its consideration of the issue of Myanmar. This memorandum is circulated with the aim of rectifying the misperceptions and misunderstanding that may still persist on the country and providing an accurate account of the recent fundamental changes in the political landscape and significant developments unfolding in the new era of Myanmar since the new constitutional civilian Government replaced the previous military Government, on 30 March 2011.

II. Brief political background of Myanmar

4. Myanmar is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious country and is home to eight major ethnic groups comprising over 100 ethnic nationalities. It is situated in a strategic part of Asia, surrounded by countries with different political systems, cultures and religions. Its five neighbours include the world's two most populous countries, namely, China and India. It also belongs to important regional groupings such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation. The challenges faced by Myanmar are therefore complex. Myanmar maintains close and harmonious relations with all her neighbours, based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence. These unique circumstances of Myanmar should be taken into account whenever its situation is considered.

5. Myanmar opted for parliamentary democracy at independence in 1948. The parliamentary system did not live up to expectations and lasted until 1962, when the Revolutionary Council took over the State power and switched to a one-party socialist system by adopting a Constitution in 1974. During 1988, following the nationwide unrest mainly caused by dissatisfaction over economic difficulties, Tatmadaw (the Armed Forces) was compelled to take the responsibilities of the State to prevent the country from disintegration.

6. Recognizing that national unity is vital for a multi-ethnic country, the previous Government made every effort for national reconsolidation by making peace overtures to all armed insurgent groups. It has resulted in the return to the legal fold

of 17 out of 18 major armed insurgent groups. The Government has always kept the door of peace open for the remaining armed groups.

7. A seven-step road map to democracy was adopted in August 2003 to transform the country into a modern, developed and democratic nation. The Government implemented the full cycle of its road map for a peaceful transition to democracy, step by step, including the drafting of a new constitution by a national convention, adoption of the Constitution with overwhelming support of the people in a nationwide referendum held in May 2008, enactment of five electoral laws and by-laws on 8 March 2010, and the holding of multi-party general elections.

III. Recent developments in Myanmar

Multi-party general elections

8. The multi-party general elections were held on 7 November 2010 in a peaceful, fair and orderly manner. Political parties and independent representatives were allowed to participate in the election after being registered systematically, according to the electoral law. A total of 37 political parties, including 19 parties from different national races, contested the elections, and the representatives of 22 parties won seats in Parliament. The elections provided a sound foundation and a profound meaning for the realization of democracy and national reconsolidation.

Emergence of a new constitutional civilian Government

9. The first Hluttaw (Parliament) since 1988 was convened on 30 January 2011. The new Constitution entered into force on the first day of the commencement of the Hluttaw. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) elected and affirmed President U Thein Sein and Vice-Presidents Thiha Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo and Sai Mauk Kham on 30 March 2011. Thirty Union Ministers and other Union Level appointees for the Union Government, Financial Commission, Union Supreme Court and Constitutional Tribunal of the Union, Union Election Commission, Union Civil Services Board, Union Chief Justice, Union Attorney-General and Union Auditor-General were nominated and confirmed by the First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and later appointed by the President.

10. The State Peace and Development Council was dissolved on 30 March 2011, paving the way for a new elected Government. Hence, the new civilian Government emerged, in line with the new Constitution, on 30 March 2011, thereby replacing the military Government. It is the first significant change in the form of governance within a span of 23 years in Myanmar. Moreover, it is the first elected Government based on a parliamentary democracy in 50 years, providing political space for all participating political parties. Today, elected representatives are exercising their democratic rights in the legislative bodies.

11. The changes are not only in the form of governance, but also in essence and policies in various aspects. In his inaugural speech to the Parliament on 30 March 2011, President U Thein Sein outlined the Government's future agenda and gave policy guidance on many aspects, including economic and administrative reforms, as well as foreign relations. The President emphasized national solidarity, good governance and clean government, the flourishing of democratic practices, the fundamental rights of citizens, the rule of law, transparency and accountability,

respect for the role of media, reduction of income disparity, economic reform and environmental conservation. All these policy guidelines are being implemented by all Government ministries and institutions. Just over six months into office, the new Government of Myanmar has turned a new page and undertaken a series of groundbreaking positive changes in the political, economic and social sectors.

IV. National reconsolidation endeavours

Offers of olive branch to the ethnic armed groups

12. With regard to national reconsolidation, the President has clearly stated that those who truly wish to serve in the interest of the State and the people must participate in the political process by taking part in the elections in accordance with the Constitution and setting aside differences. Parliaments are the only appropriate venue to discuss the future of the nation and its people.

13. The Government, demonstrating its magnanimity and genuine goodwill for national reconsolidation, asserted that the door of peace is kept open to the organizations and remaining armed groups who are still refusing to take part in the nation-building process in accordance with the Constitution. The Government is determined to pursue peaceful means in the resolution of differences with national races armed groups.

14. The Government has thus shown its sincere goodwill in the national interest by holding out an olive branch to the national races armed groups that have not accepted the Constitution yet. By its announcement No.1/2011 of 18 August 2011, the Government invited those national races armed groups wishing to make peace to contact the State or regional Government concerned, to enter into negotiations. As a result, some armed groups are now holding talks with State Government regarding a peace agreement. At the invitation of the Government, representatives from Wa (Special Region 2) and Mongla (Special Region 4) held meetings separately with the State Peacemaking Committee, formed by the Shan State Government, on 6 and 7 September 2011, and signed initial agreements for ensuring peace, stability and development in their regions and agreed to continue to hold peace talks with the Union Government.

15. The people of Myanmar are looking forward to the day when all guns in the land have fallen silent and all national races join hands to build the Union as a united, prosperous and democratic nation, standing tall among its fellow countries in the region and in the international community.

Dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

16. The talks between the Government and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also resumed soon after the emergence of the new Government. Following the assumption of office by the new Government, Union Minister U Aung Kyi and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met three times, since July 2011. During their first meeting, on 25 July, they discussed the rule of law, eliminating disagreement and serving the national interest. At the second meeting, on 12 August, they reached an agreement to cooperate in pursuing stability of the State and national development, in order to fulfil the actual needs and desires of the entire people for the further flourishing of democracy in Myanmar and for ensuring economic and social development. At their third meeting,

they discussed steps being taken by the President to grant amnesty, ways and means for bilateral cooperation in the conservation of the Ayeyarwady River, endeavours of the Government to build lasting peace with armed groups within the framework of law and cooperation in ensuring community peace and the prevalence of law and order. Both sides also agreed to continue their meetings.

17. The President met Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for the first time on 19 August 2011, in Nay Pyi Taw, and had a friendly and candid discussion to find out potential common ground for cooperation in the interest of the nation and the people, setting aside different views. This is one of the significant developments widely welcomed by both the local and international community.

Release of prisoners

18. In an effort towards national reconsolidation, the issue of the release of prisoners has been given due consideration by the Government. In that regard, the President has exercised the mandate vested upon him by the Constitution, granting an amnesty for the first time on 16 May 2011. Under the amnesty, over 20,000 inmates were released.

19. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discussed the release of prisoners and submitted their request to the President during the second session of the Pyithu Hluttaw, in September 2011. On 10 October 2011, the Chairman of the newly formed Myanmar National Human Rights Commission submitted a request in an open letter to the President for his favourable consideration to granting amnesty to prisoners who have been sentenced to imprisonment for contravening the existing laws.

20. The President, taking into consideration all the requests and sentiments of the people, has granted an amnesty, for the second time, on this occasion for 6,359 prisoners, according to the announcement made on 11 October 2011.

Economic reforms

21. Immediately after its formation, the new Government undertook a series of economic, social and policy reform measures to improve the socio-economic life of the people. A number of economic reform initiatives and structural adjustments have also been introduced to ease the effect of the weakening United States dollar value in trade and economic activities.

22. The Government attaches the highest priority to improving the livelihoods of people in rural areas, who represent over 70 per cent of the entire population. To that end, the Government organized a national workshop on rural development and poverty alleviation, on 20 May 2011, with the participation of stakeholders from a wide range of society. The workshop was the first of its kind in Myanmar.

23. President U Thein Sein personally graced the workshop and mentioned in his opening address that the Government would review monetary, financial, trade and investment policies in order to accelerate the economic development of Myanmar, in line with the market-oriented economic system.

24. The first step in the implementation of these reforms is the adoption of the national rural development and poverty reduction plan, in eight priority areas. The President has instructed eight Government ministries to implement the national action plan. After the successful implementation of the plan, the current poverty rate

of 26 per cent is expected to drop to 16 per cent by the year 2014/15, in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

25. In the social sphere, one of the bold steps taken by the Government for the welfare of the people is the raising of pension allowances for retired service personnel, commensurate with the changing economic and social conditions of the country. As a result, over 815,000 retired service personnel are now benefiting from this measure.

26. With the aim of energizing the country's export trade, commercial tax on export goods has recently been reduced from 8 per cent to 2 per cent, and the Government has granted tax exemptions on the export of all agricultural produce and timber export products, in order to significantly boost external trade.

27. The Government has also been providing loans up to the village level so as to expand comparable growth between the rural and urban areas under the microfinance scheme. Under this initiative, small and medium enterprises throughout the country will achieve considerable progress in the years ahead. These structural adjustment programmes in the economic and financial sectors are already making an impact. In addition, a series of workshops and seminars on the promotion of education, health and environmental conservation have been held.

28. The Government has been reviewing fiscal, trade and investment policies. At present, Myanmar is updating the existing Foreign Investment Law in order to attract more foreign direct investment into the country. As of July 2011, 454 business entities from 31 countries have invested over US$ 36 billion in Myanmar. The total export volume from April to July 2011 was over US$ 5 billion, an increase of 26.62 per cent over the same period last year.

V. Cooperation with the United Nations

Visits of United Nations officials

29. Cooperation with the United Nations is one of the cornerstones of Myanmar's foreign policy. Myanmar will continue to pursue its independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence and will maintain friendly relations with all nations. Myanmar has participated in all major activities of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in various fields, including human rights. Myanmar also cooperates with the United Nations within the framework of the good offices role of the Secretary-General.

30. Following the emergence of the new Government, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General have visited Myanmar on many occasions. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, Vijay Nambiar, visited Myanmar in May 2011. During his visit, he met with Union Ministers, high-level officials, representatives of political parties, representatives of United Nations agencies in Myanmar and civil society organizations. Likewise, at the invitation of the Government, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, visited Myanmar from 21 to 25 August 2011. During his visit, he met with the speakers and members of Parliament, Union Government Ministers and representatives of ethnic political parties. He also had the privilege to observe the second regular session of the Parliament. He met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and visited Insein prison in Yangon. In the press release issued

at the conclusion of his visit to Myanmar, on 25 August, the Special Rapporteur said "It is evident that since its formation earlier this year, the Government has taken a number of steps that have the potential to bring about an improvement in the human rights situation of Myanmar".

VI. Promotion and protection of human rights

31. Myanmar strongly supports the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, which opposes and condemns selectivity and double standards in the promotion and protection of human rights and the exploitation of human rights for political purposes. Myanmar attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of human rights. It also accords priority to the right to development and has been striving for the all-round development of the country. Section 347 of the Constitution states that "The Union shall guarantee any person to enjoy equal rights before the law and shall equally provide legal protection."

32. With a view to further promoting and safeguarding the fundamental rights of the citizens as prescribed in the Constitution, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, comprising 15 members, was formed on 5 September 2011. The Commission is composed of independent experts from all strata of life, including various national races, and the members are well respected by the community they represent.

33. On 6 October 2011, the Commission opened its office in Yangon and began the task of accepting complaints on alleged violations of the fundamental rights of citizens. Citizens who believe that their rights are violated could freely file their complaints to the Commission. Upon receiving a complaint, the Commission will investigate it and the findings will be transmitted to the concerned authorities for redress. The Commission will submit its annual report directly to the President of the Republic. Standing as an independent human rights entity, the Commission, while striving to promote and protect human rights in the domestic context, will also actively cooperate with international organizations such as the United Nations, the Human Rights Council and other regional groupings.

34. As a gesture of Myanmar's renewed cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the organization has been permitted to visit prisons in Myanmar to provide assistance.

35. The human rights situation in Myanmar was reviewed by the Human Rights Council's Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, on 27 January 2011. During the session of the Working Group, 57 countries contributed 190 recommendations on the human rights situation in Myanmar. Out of these, 74 recommendations enjoyed the acceptance of the Government and 46 recommendations were brought back to the capital for further consideration. At the plenary meeting of the seventeenth session of the Human Rights Council, in June 2011, Myanmar agreed to accept four additional recommendations out of the 46 recommendations. The remaining 42 recommendations received either a partial acceptance or no acceptance at all, owing to the inclusive language and ambiguous nature of those recommendations.

VII. Eradication of forced labour and support for freedom of association

36. Myanmar and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have enjoyed cooperative relations since Myanmar joined the organization in 1948. After four decades, Myanmar's traditional practice of contributing voluntary labour for community development activities was questioned by ILO. The issue was brought before ILO by anti-Government groups. Notwithstanding the measures taken by ILO, Myanmar continues to demonstrate its firm commitment to the eradication of the practice of forced labour in the country. The "Ward or Village-tract Administration Bill" is now before the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament). The bill, when promulgated as law, will effectively contribute to Myanmar's efforts in eliminating the practice of forced labour in the country.

37. In February 2007, the Government of Myanmar and ILO signed a supplementary understanding on the establishment of a mechanism to address the issue of forced labour. The mechanism to deal with complaints about forced labour is fully operational. The supplementary understanding between Myanmar and ILO has been renewed annually.

38. Regarding freedom of association, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, with technical assistance from ILO, has drafted a labour organization law in line with ILO Convention No. 87. On 29 August 2011, the Amyotha Hluttaw unanimously passed the Labour Organization Bill that was submitted by the Union Minister for Labour. The bill was signed into effect by the President on 11 October 2011. With the promulgation of the law, labour organizations will subsequently be formed.

VIII. Violence against women

39. In Myanmar, women constitute over 50 per cent of the total population. Traditionally and culturally, women and girls in Myanmar are protected from human rights abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence. Violence against women is abhorred and taken as a sin in the society. Under the Penal Code, rape is a serious crime, where a convict could be punished with heavy sentences ranging from 7 to 20 years in prison. Gang rape is unheard of in Myanmar. The allegations of sexual violence against and gang rape of ethnic women and children are baseless and merely aimed at tarnishing the image of the Myanmar Armed Forces. Myanmar categorically rejects these allegations.

40. The Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar guarantees the promotion and protection of human rights and Chapter VIII thereof deals with fundamental rights and principles. Myanmar is now in the process of reviewing the 342 existing domestic laws for their conformity with the provisions of the new Constitution and Myanmar's international obligations under the conventions and treaties, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

IX. Religious tolerance

41. In Myanmar, the majority of the population is Buddhist. However, other religions, such as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, coexist and flourish throughout the country. Religious tolerance and freedom of worship are guaranteed by law and in practice. Furthermore, Chapter I, section 34 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar clearly prescribes freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess and practise religion. The Government encourages and maintains inter-religious harmony and freedom of worship. The Ministry of Religious Affairs is coordinating and supporting the promotion of the activities of all religions in Myanmar.

42. The allegation concerning travel restrictions imposed on Muslims by the Government are unfounded. Citizens of all faith are permitted to travel in total freedom across the country. It is not an issue of religious discrimination, but an issue of illegal immigration. Allegations of religious intolerance in Myanmar are groundless and politically motivated.

X. Combating illegal narcotic drugs

43. Myanmar has been relentlessly waging a determined war against narcotic drugs, as a matter of national responsibility, for decades. To effectively combat this menace, Myanmar has laid down a comprehensive 15-year National Plan, since 1999. A budget of 33,588.14 billion Kyats and US$ 150 million has been allocated for the projects. National efforts against drugs are based on two strategies: to strive for the eradication of narcotic drugs as a national task, and to strive for the elimination of poppy cultivation through the promotion of the living standards of the national races residing in the border areas. These strategies are buttressed by strengthened legislation and effective law enforcement. With these national efforts, Myanmar has been contributing towards achieving the goal of drug-free ASEAN in 2015. Myanmar aims to rid the country of narcotic drugs by 2014, one year ahead of the target year set by ASEAN.

44. Poppy cultivation in Myanmar has been reduced by 76.6 per cent, and opium production has also been reduced up to 67 per cent, according to a 2011 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. From 1997 to 2011, Myanmar has managed to destroy 90,234.98 hectares of poppy cultivation. Myanmar has also set fire to and destroyed US$ 18,203 billion worth of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. During the period from January to June 2011 alone, law enforcement agencies confiscated 647.7 kg of opium, 38.89 kg of heroin, 1.66 million tablets of amphetamine-type stimulants and 88.51 kg of ephedrine.

XI. Prevention of military recruitment of underage children

45. The Myanmar Armed Forces is an all-volunteer army. Under Myanmar Defence Services and War Office Council instructions, only individuals who have attained the age of 18 are permitted to enlist in the armed forces. Forced conscription in any form is strictly prohibited. With a view to further enhancing the Government's effort to prevent the military recruitment of underage children, the Committee for the Prevention of Military Recruitment of Underage Children was

established on 5 January 2004. On 25 May 2011, the Committee was reconstituted with eight members, led by the Union Minister for Defence. The main task of the Committee is to prevent recruitment of underage children, to protect the interests of underage children and to ensure strict adherence to the orders and instructions for the protection of underage children. The Committee has also set up a task force composed of the relevant line ministries. The Government is working closely with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and international non-governmental organizations in the demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration process for underage children. A plan of action on the prevention of recruitment of underage children is being drafted jointly by the Government of Myanmar and the United Nations country team. It is expected to be signed shortly.

46. In order to raise awareness among those who are involved in the recruitment process, the Government of Myanmar, UNICEF and international non-governmental organizations are conducting workshops on the promotion and protection of children's rights and the directives and regulations governing the recruitment process. The Government has also introduced a fingerprint identifying control system database at four major recruitment centres, to ensure a stricter scrutiny during the recruitment process. Punitive action has been taken against recruiters who contravene military recruitment regulations. From 2004 to date, disciplinary action has been taken against 23 officers and 146 other military personnel who failed to abide by the rules and regulations of military recruitment. The Government has been regularly providing updated information on the progress of its awareness-raising activities and the number and specific particulars of the underage children discharged from the military to the country team and to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

XII. Combating trafficking in persons

47. Myanmar has achieved considerable progress in the fight against human trafficking at both the national and regional levels. The Penal Code, which provides for heavy penalties against the perpetrators, has been buttressed by the Anti-Human Trafficking Law, enacted in September 2005. The Central Body for the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking and anti-human trafficking bodies at the State/regional/township levels were established in 2006. The Central Body is headed by the Minister for Home Affairs, and three working groups have been established to address human trafficking. Myanmar is implementing the third 3-year plan to combat human trafficking, for the period covering 2011 to 2013.

48. Myanmar is also participating in the regional anti-human trafficking process known as the Bali Process. To strengthen the multisectoral response to the human trafficking question in the Greater Mekong Subregion, an agreement was signed in Yangon, in October 2004, under the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking.

49. Myanmar is a party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and two Protocols — the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. Bilateral memorandums of understanding on the prevention of human trafficking have been signed with Thailand and the People's Republic of China.

XIII. Conclusion

50. Today, Myanmar has entered a new era. The new constitutional Government is pursuing the national goal of building a modern, developed and democratic nation, in accordance with the will of the people. Progress in the political, economic and social spheres of the country will be incremental, systematic and dynamic. Myanmar is changing, and changing for real progress. At this crucial juncture of national transition towards a democratic society, the international community can best assist Myanmar by providing encouragement, support and cooperation rather than by the undue political pressure and prescriptive resolutions in the United Nations and international forums.

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Agenda item 69 (a)
Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments

Letter dated 26 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to a communiqué of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in which it condemns in the strongest possible terms the barbaric policies pursued by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and its allies in Libya (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this letter to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 69 (a) of the agenda.

(*Signed*) Jorge **Valero**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 26 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Communiqué from the Ministry of People's Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

21 October 2011

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela condemns in the strongest possible terms the barbaric policies pursued by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its allies in Libya, which have plunged this sister nation into war and subverted, by force, the institutional order of that country.

The crime committed on 20 October 2011 against the Libyan leader, Muammar al-Qadhafi, is emblematic of the crimes perpetrated against the Libyan people by the colonial powers over the past few months and shows that a violent policy of regime change has been conducted in this African nation, in violation of the most basic principles of international law.

The unilateral and illegal military aggression of NATO against a country which did not carry out a single act of war sets an unfortunate precedent which could be used at the convenience of the empire against any nation of the South that gets in the way of its policy of domination.

Venezuela reaffirms its unwavering commitment to peace and reiterates its condemnation of the culture of death imposed by the Western elites which nowadays are burning the world in order to appropriate the sovereign wealth and resources of the peoples.